

this next brief extension they will work with the Senate and House committees to pass program changes that resolve these issues fairly, effectively and expeditiously. Their plan does not work and the small business and lending communities are opposed to it. We need a plan that does.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to resolve this as soon as possible.●

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 3915) was read the third time and passed.

DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MARCH 7 THROUGH MARCH 13, 2004, AS "NATIONAL PATIENT SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK"

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 320, submitted earlier today by Senators GRAHAM of Florida, SNOWE, GREGG, and others.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 320) designating the week of March 7 through 13, 2004, as "National Patient Safety Awareness Week."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I am very pleased to introduce a resolution to recognize the week of March 7–March 14 as "National Patient Safety Awareness Week" with my colleagues and friends Senator SNOWE, Senator GREGG, Senator DODD and Senator JEFFORDS.

We know that patient safety is a paramount health care issue today: a 1998 Institute of Medicine study shocked us with the fact that nearly 100,000 Americans die each year from medical errors in our clinical settings alone, which highlights both the gravity and emotion associated with this complex challenge.

Some of us have experienced the tragedy of medical error, either directly or through a family member or friend. We are not unique; estimates show that about one in every 5 Americans has experienced a medical error or has a family member who has experienced a medical error.

In addition to the profound emotional cost of these errors, the added burden placed on an already overburdened health care system is equally profound. The cost of medical care provided to correct an error, and the lost wages for those whose recoveries are extended because of medical errors is significant. The Institute of Medicine put a price tag of between \$17 and \$29

billion per year on the overall costs to our economy and our citizens due to medical errors.

We can do better; indeed, we must do better. We can strengthen our efforts to apply proven safety techniques from other sectors and industries that have developed a culture of safety, like the aviation industry. By focusing on system changes, significant progress can be achieved in making our health care system safer.

As legislators, we have drafted a range of proposals to address and improve the systems factors that lead to medical errors. As we think about ways to create a safer health care system, we must continue to work with healthcare professionals, patients and their families to ensure our healthcare systems place an absolute premium on the safety of its patients. In this regard, Senator SNOWE and I have introduced a bill to reduce medication errors in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Other cosponsors of this resolution have supported legislation that would create a voluntary reporting system. As we consider these pieces of legislation, it is important to remember that medical errors are a multifaceted problem to which there are multiple solutions.

This resolution addresses another key element in our quest to make our health care system safer: that being to fuel the "power of partnership" between patients, families and healthcare professionals. The "power of partnership" is the theme of this year's Patient Safety Awareness Week, sponsored by the National Patient Safety Foundation. Our recognition of National Patient Safety Awareness Week is an important addition to our efforts to create a safer health care system by promoting increased patient education and highlighting the importance of partnership between healthcare providers and patients.

"Patient Safety Awareness Week" deserves the support of the United States Congress, and I urge my colleagues to support this Senate Resolution. While Patient Safety Awareness Week will not solve all the challenges associated with medical errors, it does launch us on a path of progress, and brings us one step closer.

Through a bipartisan partnership we can highlight the importance of patient safety and the role of the patient and their families in achieving a safer health care system.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD as if read, without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 320) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 320

Whereas patient safety is an issue of significant importance to the United States;

Whereas 1 in every 5 citizens of the United States has experienced a medical error or has a family member who has experienced a medical error;

Whereas medical errors often have serious and profound consequences;

Whereas it is estimated that injuries from preventable medical errors cost the United States economy between \$17,000,000,000 and \$29,000,000,000 each year;

Whereas more people die annually from medical errors than from automobile accidents, breast cancer, and AIDS;

Whereas increased patient and provider education and collaboration can help avoid medical errors;

Whereas the Institute of Medicine has stated that a "critical component of a comprehensive strategy to improve patient safety is to create an environment that encourages organizations to identify errors, evaluate causes and take appropriate actions to improve performance in the future," and further, that "a more conducive environment is needed to encourage health care professionals and organizations to identify, analyze, and report errors without threat of litigation and without compromising patients' legal rights";

Whereas better systems can be implemented to reduce the factors that lead to medical errors;

Whereas innovative educational and research programs are being conducted by the National Patient Safety Foundation as well as by other public and private entities to develop methods for avoiding preventable injuries and to assess the effectiveness of new techniques to increase patient safety; and

Whereas education of the public on medical errors and the factors that typically lead to medical errors empowers patients to be more effective partners with health care providers in the battle against preventable injuries from medical errors: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of March 7 through March 13, 2004, as "National Patient Safety Awareness Week"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the week with appropriate programs and activities.

NATIONAL SAFE PLACE WEEK

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 309 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 309) designating the week beginning March 14, 2004, as "National Safe Place Week".

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.